

**SUMMARY OF THE
TRANSITION COMMITTEE MEETING
FEBRUARY 10, 2000**

The Transition Committee of the National Environmental Laboratory Accreditation Conference (NELAC) met by teleconference on Thursday, February 10, 2000 at 4 p.m. Eastern Standard Time (EST). In the absence of Dr. Charles Brokopp of the Utah Department of Health, the meeting was led by the committee's co-chair, Ms. Carol Batterton of the Texas Natural Resource Conservation Commission (TNRCC). A list of action items is given in Attachment A. A list of participants is given in Attachment B. *The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the issues contained on the committee's agenda.*

AGENDA ITEMS

Review and Approval of Minutes, and Review of Action Items, from the January 27, 2000 Meeting

Ms. Batterton opened the meeting by reviewing the agenda items planned for discussion. Those items, and the related discussion points on each, are detailed below. She then asked for corrections or additions to the draft minutes of the January 27, 2000 meeting of the committee. One correction to the contact information for a committee member was identified. Ms. Batterton then reviewed the action items as contained in the draft minutes of the January 27th meeting. Two of those four action items were deemed "completed" and two were deemed "ongoing." A motion was heard and seconded that the minutes be approved as written, and the committee voted unanimously for approval.

Update on the Proposed Meeting between the NELAC Board of Directors and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) Deputy Administrator

The NELAC Board of Directors is in the process of requesting a meeting with the USEPA Deputy Administrator Michael McCabe. Ms. Batterton asked Dr. Kenneth Jackson of the New York State Department of Health and a member of the NELAC Board for an update on preparations for that meeting. He reviewed with the committee the content of the letter of request that has been drafted by the board. That draft letter and a short briefing paper have been forwarded to NELAC Chairman Dr. James Pearson of the Virginia Division of Consolidated Laboratory Services. It is the intent of Dr. Pearson to submit the letter and briefing paper to Mr. McCabe in the next several days. Several comments from the committee regarding the letter's content were heard and will be passed along to Dr. Pearson by Dr. Jackson.

Other Business

Ms. Batterton asked Mr. Jerry Parr of Catalyst Information Resources, L.L.C. for updates on meetings he had recently attended regarding issues currently under discussion by this committee. Mr. Parr is a Transition Committee member as well as a member of ACIL (formerly the American Council of Independent Laboratories). He reported that he and other ACIL representatives had

met with Ms. Nancy Wentworth of the USEPA and Mr. Jim Wolford of USEPA's Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) Office regarding data quality and data integrity issues.

Mr. Parr reported that within USEPA's newly-formed Office of Information there exists a Quality Information Council comprised of Mr. Henry Longest of USEPA's Office of Research and Development (ORD) and other USEPA staff. A subcommittee of this council is devoted to covering issues regarding data quality but neither that subcommittee nor any other could be identified by Mr. Parr as covering concerns regarding laboratory accreditation.

From a meeting between ACIL members and Mr. Longest and others, Mr. Parr reported the following:

- that ORD supports NELAC in principle and its standards-setting activities but cannot continue to support certain administrative aspects of NELAC in a time of shrinking funding,
- that ORD is seeking models upon which it might restructure its relationship with NELAC, the states, etc.,
- that ORD might be agreeable to approaching the Environmental Council of States (ECOS) for support of NELAC,
- and that EPA has established a working group to focus on Agency policy regarding laboratory accreditation.

At Dr. Jackson's request, Mr. Parr will provide a summarization of this meeting to Dr. Pearson.

Mr. Parr also reported on a meeting between ACIL members and legal staff of the office of Senator Robert Smith (R-NH), who chairs the U.S. Senate Environment and Public Works Committee. ACIL-proposed authorization language for NELAC was shared with the staff, who offered to provide it to Senator Smith in the hopes that his affiliation with that committee would generate some increased visibility for NELAC.

Mr. Parr reviewed the content of the draft authorization language with Transition Committee members. ACIL intends to use this document to elicit additional support for NELAC from all parties within the environmental laboratory community with which it engages. Much of the discussion focused on the language specifically authorizing USEPA to collect user fees for NELAC and on references to public sector/private sector consensus standards organizations. Ms. Batterton asked that Drs. Brokopp and Jackson circulate the document to the NELAC Board of Directors for their identification of relevant/significant issues to which the Transition Committee might direct future attention and deliberation.

An issue involving the State of California and its laboratory certification program was brought to the attention of the committee. The State of California has told laboratories in its certification program that, because it has no funding allocation for travel (for on-site assessments), it would have to terminate laboratory certifications as they expire. Because these laboratories currently would not have the option of applying for accreditation through the National Environmental Laboratory Accreditation Program (NELAP) for approximately five months, the question was asked of committee members whether they thought it reasonable to request that the State of

California offer a five-month extension to its certifications until NELAP accreditation becomes available. Because the committee determined this not to be an issue under its jurisdiction or that of NELAC, it was recommended that either Ms. Deborah Loring or Mr. Parr contact Dr. Paul Kimsey of the California Department of Health Services.

NEXT MEETING

With the extreme importance of several issues under current discussion, including USEPA/NELAC restructuring models and NELAC authorization language, committee members agreed that Ms. Batterton should schedule the next teleconference of the Transition Committee for Thursday, February 17, 2000, from 4 p.m. to 5:30p.m. EST.

**ACTION ITEMS
TRANSITION COMMITTEE MEETING
FEBRUARY 10, 2000**

Item No.	Action	Date to be Completed
1.	Dr. Jackson will forward to Dr. James Pearson comments from the Transition Committee regarding the NELAC Board of Directors' draft letter that will be sent to EPA Deputy Administrator McCabe.	
2.	Mr. Parr will provide to Dr. Pearson a summarization of the meeting between ACIL members and Mr. Longest and other EPA staff.	
3.	Dr. Brokopp and/or Dr. Jackson will circulate the ACIL draft authorization language for NELAC to the NELAC Board for comment and identification of relevant issues for future committee consideration.	
4.	Ms. Batterton will schedule the next committee teleconference for Thursday, February 17, 2000 from 4 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. Eastern Standard Time.	

**PARTICIPANTS
TRANSITION COMMITTEE MEETING
FEBRUARY 10, 2000**

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